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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/880,100	06/14/2001	Andreas Birkner	016790-0407	3827

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FOLEY AND LARDNER
SUITE 500
3000 K STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

EXAMINER

BRAHAN, THOMAS J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3652

DATE MAILED: 04/15/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/880,100	Applicant(s) BIRKNER ET AL.	
	Examiner Thomas J. Brahan	Art Unit 3652	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 January 2005.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5,7-9,12-16 and 20-30 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 5,7-9,12,14-16,20-24 and 26-30 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) 13 and 25 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3652

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of potential 35 U.S.C. § 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

2. Claims 5, 7-9, 14, 15 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tepman et al in view of Slocum et al. Tepman et al shows the basic claimed processing system with a workstation (344) having several side walls with two of the sidewalls having substrate conveying modules (326 and 328) attached thereto. Tepman et al varies from the claims by not showing the connections for the modules to the workstation as to have kinematic coupling elements. However the use of kinematic coupling elements is conventional in the art as disclosed by Slocum et al. It would have been obvious to a mechanic with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the modular wafer handling system of Tepman et al by using kinematic couplings, for accurate alignment during assembly, as taught by Slocum et al.

3. Claims 5, 7-9, 12, 14-16, 20-24 and 26-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Komino in view of Slocum et al. Komino shows the basic claimed processing system with a workstation (14) having several side walls with two of the sidewalls having substrate conveying modules (130A and 130B) attached thereto. Komino varies from the claims by not showing the connections for the modules to the workstation as to have kinematic coupling elements. However the use of kinematic coupling elements is conventional in the art as disclosed by Slocum et al. It would have been obvious to a mechanic with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the modular wafer handling system of Komino by using kinematic couplings, for accurate alignment during assembly, as taught by Slocum et al. The system of Komino is considered as variable and flexible, as conveying module (130A) and conveying module (130B) could be interchanged, as broadly and functionally recited in the claim 21.

Art Unit: 3652

4. Claims 13 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. Applicant argues in the amendment filed July 8, 2004, that the Stark et al reference does not have connectors at the side walls. This argument is not understood, as the reference clearly teaches that the modules are interchangeable into different configurations, see column 6, lines 40-42, and shows screws (S_1 and S_2 ; see figure 4) as connections at the gate valves between the workstations and the conveying stations. Applicant's remaining remarks in the amendment have been considered, but are deemed non-persuasive, as detailed above in the rejections.

6. Applicant's remarks in the amendment filed January 19, 2005 have been considered, but are deemed moot in view of the above new rejections. The amendment necessitated the new rejections, accordingly, THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.02(l)(3). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. An inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Thomas J. Brahan at telephone number (571) 272-6921. The examiner's supervisor, Ms. Eileen Lillis, can be reached at (571) 272-6928. The fax number for all patent applications is (703) 872-9306.



Thomas J. Brahan
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3652